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## ***CARDIN SAYS ACCELERATED LEASING PLAN FOR WIND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT OFF ATLANTIC COAST PUTS MARYLAND CLEAN ENERGY JOBS ON FAST TRACK***

Baltimore, MD – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD) today thanked Interior Secretary Ken Salazar for choosing Maryland as the site to launch a ‘Smart from the Start’ wind energy initiative for the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf, which will facilitate siting, leasing and construction of new projects, spurring the rapid and responsible development of this abundant renewable resource. If no significant obstacles are found, leases could be offered within a year at the end of 2011 or early 2012.

“Maryland is solidifying its position as a national leader in creating clean energy jobs that will help boost our economy, strengthen our national security by lessening our dependence on foreign oil, and protect our environment for generations to come,” **said Senator Cardin**, a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. “Smart from the Start will help expedite this important wind energy project that will bring thousands of jobs to our region that cannot be outsourced. I applaud Secretary Salazar for recognizing that the future of a clean-energy economy based on the development of renewable and alternative energy sources like wind, begins right here in Maryland.”

Speaking from Fort McHenry today, **Secretary Salazar said** that the ‘Smart from the Start’ Initiative for Atlantic wind “will allow us to identify priority Wind Energy Areas (WEAs) for potential development, improve our coordination with local, state, and federal partners, and accelerate the permitting process. If we are wise with our planning, we can help build a robust and environmentally responsible offshore renewable energy program that creates jobs here at home.”

Under the ‘Smart from the Start’ initiative, the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) will work with state partners to identify WEAs off the coasts of a number of Atlantic states, including Delaware, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, and an area off the coasts of Rhode Island and Massachusetts within the next 60 days. By January 2011, Requests for Interest and Calls for Information will be issued for these new WEAs to support lease sale environmental assessments. Maryland’s Request for Information was issued

earlier in November for a proposed offshore wind leasing area that is as close as 10 nautical miles off of Ocean City and 20 miles from Assateague.

BOEMRE will assist in developing site assessment data and evaluating potential WEA leasing. In January 2011, BOEM will initiate a NEPA environmental assessment to evaluate the potential impacts associated with site assessment activities in identified WEAs. In addition, there will be rapid and close coordination with other federal agencies to compile existing site assessment data. If no significant impacts are identified in WEAs, BOEM would offer leases in these areas by the end of 2011/early 2012.

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